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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Monday, December 5, 1938.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES." Information of interest to consumers from the Food & Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Carelessness is the theme of our Washington letter from our correspondent in the Food and Drug Administration, today.

"Careless housekeepers," she writes, "have often been criticized by their neighbors. But those same neighbors may actually be much more seriously affected by careless housekeeping on the part of men food handlers, whom they have never seen. That is, they would be affected, if inspectors of the Food and Drug Administration were not constantly on the alert.

"Careless storage and careless handling after production are responsible for many seizures of foods unfit to eat. Seizures made during September and October included: White flour, 17,680 sacks and 9 barrels; whole wheat flour, 62 sacks; rye flour, 94 sacks; corn meal, 704 sacks; hominy grits 330 sacks; rice, 197 sacks, and about 1500 cases of a rice breakfast food, and a few others.

"This is the season of the year when nuts are in high demand, with Christmas menus to be planned and Christmas stocking to fill. So one can expect the current report to mention seizures of many nuts that shouldn't have been in circulation because they were rancid or infested with insects. The largest number of nuts of one kind that didn't get to market were cashews. Almost 5,000 pounds of them were seized. So were twenty-five hundred pounds of walnut meats, and much smaller quantities of shelled pecans, peanuts, pignolia nuts and mixed nuts. Seems to me that the prospect of appetizing clean nuts for Christmas is, on the whole, encouraging! Christmas stockings will also be better off for having more than 3,000 boxes of unfit candies seized.

"Among dried products, the inspectors found over 20,000 pounds of prunes and a "long-ton"-X 2,200 pounds,- of cocoa beans that were unclean. The concentration of effort to rid the market of unfit food commodities is justified by the results achieved. It is rarely, if ever, that an infested or dirty product reaches the consumer through interstate channels.

"Canned foods, too, as well as the dried articles, are given constant supervision, demonstrated by the following seizures during the past two months: canned cherries, 380 cases; decomposing canned celery-and-tomato juice, 11 cases; tomato catsup, 573 cases, and several other tomato products, all containing mold; apple butter, 984 jars; dirty cream, unfit for butter making, 15 gallons; canned peas, spinach, pimientos, and fruit butters, all partially decomposed.

"Seafoods were likewise confiscated on government orders. Ocean perch fillet about 33,000 pounds of them, were rated unfit to be eaten; and there were over 3,000 cases of canned fish,- salmon, shad, shrimp and mackerel,- which were confiscated because the fish was decomposed before it was canned.

"Many other foods, from mackerel to mayonnaise, were seized because of short-weight or short-volume in the cans or jars; animal feeds containing less protein than the tags claimed, and such other items as the following:

"Chocolate 'malted milks' containing little or no malted milk, and in some instances, short in weight; 'milk and honey' graham crackers, containing little or no milk or honey; so-called 'true' fruit extracts and concentrates fortified with synthetics; imitation vanilla, artificially colored, and not labeled to show its imitation character; lemon and lime 'mixers' markedly deficient in true fruit juice; roasted coffee containing an excessive proportion of worthless beans; raspberry jam in which apples had been in part substituted for berries; cream containing added mineral oil, which had no food value; butter containing less than 80 percent butter fat; cheeses low in butterfat content; green tomatoes, below grade.

"This varies list gives you some idea of the foods that have been keeping the inspectors busy. In the field of drug and medicinal products, surgical dressings, and various drugs were seized. Unsterile gauze bandages, unsterile absorbent cotton and unsterile surgical sutures were seized in considerable number. Cotton plugs intended for insertion into the ears,, were found unsterile, and medical claims in the labeling for earache and other conditions were held to be false and fraudulent.

"Other medicinals picked up in September and October were 23 bottles of a preparation, bearing no declaration of its acetanilid-derivative content, as required by law; 33 bottles of a product respresented to be antiseptic and found not to be antiseptic; a deteriorated phenobarbital sodium solution; quinine sulfate tablets, deficient in that drug; substandard poultry cod-liver oil; sandalwood oil, not pure according to pharmacopoeial standards; substandard mineral oil; impure nitrous oxide (laughing gas). There were also a number of patent medicines seized on account of false and fraudulent therapeutic claims.

"The removal of injurious eyelash dyes from the market, authorized by the law of June 25, 1938, is still in progress. There were seized in the past two months 26 packages of Hollywood Lash and Brow Dye, 145 packages of Lash-Lure, 184 packages of Magic Di-Stik, and 58 packages of Mary Luckie Lash and Brow Dye. All four dyes contained irritant and corrosive chemicals, making them unsafe for use near the eyes."

"That's all of this week's letter from our Washington correspondent reporting the news from the Food and Drug Administration. Until next time, then.

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